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ABSTRACT

Educating students about character development and responsibility can and should be an integral part of the academic curriculum. This collection contains units of study that were written to exemplify some of the many ways that these themes might be taught in preK-12 Massachusetts classrooms. Using the standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as their core, these units explore the ethical dimensions of literary and artistic works, as well as incidents from history and contemporary life. According to the collection, each work is important in its own right, and each offers students, teachers, and parents a reason to talk about the expression of ideas, the dynamics of conflict and cooperation, and humanity's search for understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. Although the units are presented as separate entities in the collection, they would be most effective when used as part of a coordinated school program that involves parents and the community, and which is organized around the exploration of important human themes and character traits. The collection contains sample units for the elementary level, for the middle school level, and for the high school level. Each unit includes information on the standards it addresses, on teaching the unit, on extension, on assessment, on materials and resources needed, and on additional resources. (BT)

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ED 447 024

Character, Civility, and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

A Collection of Sample Units

SO 032 241

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Introduction: The Purpose of this Collection

Educating students about character development and responsibility can and should be an integral part of the academic curriculum. The units in this collection were written to exemplify some of the many ways that these themes might be taught in PreK-12 classrooms. Using the Standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as their core, these units explore the ethical dimensions of literary and artistic works, as well as incidents from history and contemporary life.

What do Aesop's *Fables,* the Constitution of the United States, and Picasso's painting, *Guernica*—three of the works studied in the units—have in common? First, each is important in its own right as a seminal literary, historical, or artistic work. Second, each offers students, teachers, and parents a reason to talk about the eloquent expression of ideas, the dynamics of conflict and cooperation, and humanity's search for understanding of the meaning and purpose of life.

These discussions are the heart of the units, whose effectiveness depends on the quality of classroom discourse, as well as on the content studied. Students of all ages need the chance to ponder works and ideas presented, to conduct research, to reflect and form opinions, and to find evidence in the works studied to justify their conclusions. Although the units are presented as separate entities in this volume, these units would be most effective when used as part of a coordinated school program that involves parents and the community, and that is organized in part around the exploration of important human themes and character traits.

This collection builds on the Massachusetts Department of Education publication, *Character, Civility, and the Curriculum Frameworks,* which presents selected Standards from the Curriculum Frameworks that relate to character and civic education, as well as resources for educators and parents. It is available on the Department's website, http://www.doe.mass.edu.

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How the Sample Units Were Developed

Content Specialists at the Massachusetts Department of Education wrote these units to serve as examples of a standards-based approach to character education. All of the Content Specialists are—or recently were—classroom teachers, and many are working at the Department on sabbatical from their school districts. Their fields of expertise are English language arts, foreign languages, history and social science, visual arts, bilingual education, business education, and library/media services.

Like curriculum development groups in many schools and districts, the Content Specialists functioned as a writing group, starting with drafts of units, reading each others' work, revising, editing, and learning from one another. As they worked, they refined a process for creating standards-based units.

- Start with the Standards, because these define what students should know and be able to do by the end of the unit.
- Within the curriculum for a particular grade level, select literary or artistic works, historical documents, or incidents from the past or present that are thought-provoking and that will stimulate rich discussions.
- Describe how the lesson will be taught; include the important questions that highlight character traits, ethical behavior, or universal human dilemmas.
- Finish by going back to the Standards. Design assessments that will reveal students' achievement of the standards and their depth of understanding of the moral and ethical issues involved in the unit.

How This Collection is Organized

As the Content Specialists wrote units, they found that they used many of the same Standards as the basis for their work. These Standards are on the following three pages; for the sake of brevity, abbreviated versions appear in the individual units.

Units are grouped by grade levels: elementary, middle, and high school. Please note that these divisions are not hard and fast, because many of the units may be adapted for more than one grade level.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks Standards Used in the Units

English Language Arts

STANDARD 2: Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions and interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.

STANDARD 9: Students will identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.

STANDARD 10: Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics of different genres.

STANDARD 11: Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in literature and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

STANDARD 13: Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and meaning of nonfiction or informational material and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

STANDARD 15: Students will identify and analyze how an author's choice of words appeals to the senses, creates imagery, suggests mood, and sets tone.

STANDARD 16: Students will compare and contrast similar myths and narratives from different cultures and geographic regions.

STANDARD 17: Students will interpret the meanings of literary works, nonfiction, films, and media using a variety of critical lenses and analytic techniques.

STANDARD 19: Students will write compositions with a clear focus, logically related ideas to develop it, and adequate detail.

STANDARD 21: Students will demonstrate improvement in organization, content, paragraph development, level of detail, style, tone and word choice in their compositions after revising them.

STANDARD 23: Students will use self-generated questions, note-taking, summarizing, precis writing, and outlining to enhance learning when reading or writing.

STANDARD 26: Students will obtain information by using a variety of media and evaluate the quality of material they obtain.

History and Social Science

STANDARD 1: Students will understand the chronological order of historical events and recognize the complexity of historical cause and effect, including the interaction of forces from different spheres of human activity, the importance of ideas, and of individual choices, actions, and character.

STANDARD 3: Students will acquire the ability to frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research; to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and to apply it in oral and written presentations. They will understand the many kinds and uses of evidence; and by comparing competing historical narratives, they will differentiate historical fact from fiction.

STANDARD 4: ...While attending to the distinct contributions that immigrants from various lands and of various creeds, along with Native Americans, have made to our nationhood, students should be taught, above all, the importance of our common citizenship and the imperative to treat all individuals with the respect for their dignity called for by the Declaration of Independence.

STANDARD 5: Students will describe and explain fundamental tenets of major world religions; basic ideals of ethics, including justice, consideration of others, and respect for human rights; differing conceptions of human nature; and influences over time of religion, ethics, and ideas of human nature in the arts, political and economic theories and ideologies, societal norms, education of the public, and the conduct of individual lives.

STANDARD 13: Students will describe the development of the American economy, including Massachusetts and New England, from colonial times to the present.

STANDARD 16: Students will explain forms of authority in government and other institutions; explain purposes of authority from mere power, as in a government of laws, but not of men; and describe responsible and irresponsible exercise of both authority and power.

STANDARD 17: Students will learn in progressively greater detail the content and the history of the founding documents of the United States—the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, selected Federalist papers (as required by the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993). They will assess the reasoning, purposes, and effectiveness of the documents; and similarly, elements of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

STANDARD 18: Students will describe how the American government functions at the local, state, national, and international levels, with attention to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, its Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants, and the basic elements of its frame of government; analyze the background and evolution of constitutional and democratic government in the United States to the present day; and explain the place of institutions of government in securing the rights of citizens.

Foreign Languages

STANDARD 1: Students will converse in a language other than English to provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

STANDARD 2: Students will understand and interpret ideas and information written or spoken in a language other than English.

STANDARD 3: Students of modern languages will write and speak in a language other than English to present information, concepts, and ideas on a variety of topics.

STANDARD 4: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the traditions, perspectives, practices, and products of the culture studied, including human commonalties as reflected in history, literature, and the visual and performing arts.

STANDARD 5: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language through comparison of the language studied with their own.

Arts

VISUAL ARTS

STANDARD 3: Students will demonstrate their powers of observation, abstraction, invention, and expression in a variety of media, materials, and techniques.

STANDARD 6: Students will describe the purposes for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created, and where appropriate, interpret their meanings.

STANDARD 10: Students will use knowledge of the arts and cultural resources in the study of the arts, English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

Comprehensive Health

STANDARD 5: Students will define character traits such as honesty, trustworthiness, self-discipline, respectfulness, and kindness and describe their contribution to identity, self-concept, decision making, and interpersonal relationships.

STANDARD 7: Students will recognize the positive contribution of character traits such as tolerance, honesty, self-discipline, respectfulness, and kindness to relationships...and the detrimental effect of prejudice on individual relationships and society as a whole.

STANDARD 11: Students will identify those character traits that are connected with peaceful living in society, such as respectfulness, tolerance, honesty, self-discipline, kindness, and empathy.

Sample Units for the Elementary Level

English Language Arts

Using Aesop's *Fables* to Explore Character Traits page 9

This unit begins with the literary genre of the fable, and examines how animals in fables embody character traits.

English Language Arts, History and Social Science, and Foreign Languages

Courage and Leadership: *The Story of Moses* page 11

Versions of the story of Moses in Egypt in literature and film present students with the opportunity to discuss the meaning of liberty and why it has been important to people all over the world throughout human history. The unit includes strategies for teaching English language learners.

History and Social Science

The Golden Rule and Codes of Conduct page 13

The precept, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you," is found in many cultures and religions. As fourth graders study ancient world civilizations, they learn about how rules for conduct came to be, and discuss how these ideals from the remote past relate to their lives today.

Arts: Visual Arts

Purposes and Meanings in the Arts: Images of Sharing, Harmony, and Cooperation page 15

The visual arts offer the teacher a rich reservoir of evocative material through which to explore the portrayal of character. Paintings and prints selected for elementary students show images of sharing, harmony, and cooperation.

Please see also units in the middle and high school sections
"Kindness and Happiness: *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters,*" page 18
"Grimms' *Fairy Tales* and Character Education," page 22
"The Wonderful Land of Oz," page 40

Using Aesop's *Fables* to Explore Character Traits

Summary

Fables are very short stories that teach a moral or a lesson about conduct. Usually associated with Aesop, who was born in Asia Minor about 600 BC, fables seldom have more than three characters and the plots are usually based on a single incident. The characters-animals, or occasionally, the elements—speak as human beings, and represent different aspects of human nature. Because they are both brief and thought-provoking, fables are appropriate for students at a variety of reading levels.

Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, STANDARDS 9, 10, 11
COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH, STANDARD 5

Teaching the Unit

Discuss the character traits *honesty, trustworthiness, self-discipline, respectfulness,* and *kindness.* Help students understand the meaning of the traits and discuss situations where these traits could be identified and practiced. Read together several versions of different fables, including the moral of each. *What character traits do students recognize?* Continue reading fables individually and begin to make a class list of the morals from the fables.

Read another fable aloud, but this time do not read the moral. Instead, ask groups of students to discuss the fable, decide upon an appropriate moral, and present this to the class. Read a second fable and ask students to write a moral without consulting their classmates. As a class, consider the following questions:

- Why do you think Aesop used certain animals to represent certain character traits?
- What universal themes are found in these fables?
- How are fables different from other stories?
- Why do you think Aesop's *Fables* are still being read by students today?
- What lessons can we learn from reading Aesop's *Fables?*

More than 2,500 years ago, Aesop recorded fables that still have meaning for us today.

Grade Levels: Grades K–4, but could be adapted for grades 5–12

Content Areas: English Language Arts, Comprehensive Health

Extension

As teachers explore other literature throughout the year, they can encourage students to use a class reading chart to record reading choices and to distinguish among types of literature. For example, they can identify the character traits of American folk heroes or heroes in traditional literature from other cultures and discuss how authors exaggerate plot and characterization in order to develop theme.

Assessment

Students could be assessed both formally and informally on their ability to:

- identify the basic facts and ideas in certain fables and retell the story and moral;
- identify the aspects of human nature that characters in Aesop's *Fables* represent, and how these characters advance the purpose of the each fable;
- identify characteristics of a particular genre and distinguish among common forms—such as poetry, prose, fiction, and nonfiction;
- identify themes in fictional and nonfictional works, and relate them to personal experiences; and
- apply knowledge of the concept of universal themes to analyze and compare works, providing evidence from the text to support their ideas.

Materials and Resources

Aesop for Children. (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1994)
Aesop's Fables, edited by Michael Hague. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1985)
Aesop's Fables. (New York: Barron's, 1998)
Many other versions the fables are available—try to get a variety of retellings and illustrators, so that students can compare interpretations.

A variety of poetry, prose, fiction, and nonfiction reflecting universal character traits should also be available. The school library/media specialist, reading specialist, or public librarian can assist in compiling these resources. Ask the children's librarian in the public library about the "Open Books, Find Heroes" program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and the Massachusetts Regional Library System.

Additional Resources

Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, Appendices A, B, and C
Caldecott Medal: **http://www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott.html**
Newbery Medal: **http://www.ala.org/alsc/newbery.html**
Open Books, Find Heroes: **http://www.wmrls.org/hero/review.html**
75 Authors and Illustrators Everyone Should Know:
http://www.cbcbooks.org/navigation/teaindex.html

Courage and Leadership: *The Story of Moses*

Summary

History and literature offer many opportunities to explore how critical decisions can have widespread effects for humanity. As fourth graders study the history of Egypt and ancient Israel, they learn about the Biblical account of Moses, as related in Exodus. They learn the story of a mother's determination to save her son, and the courageous choices of the grown-up Moses as a leader of his people. Designed for students who are learning English, this unit involves reading aloud, and discussing text, illustrations, and film.

Standards and Core Knowledge

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, STANDARDS 2, 15
FOREIGN LANGUAGES, STANDARDS 1, 4
HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, STANDARD 1
CORE KNOWLEDGE, WORLD HISTORY
Section 1 d. Human Beginnings and Early Civilizations (Prehistory to 1000 BC)
Early civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and India
VISUAL ARTS STANDARD 3

Teaching Strategies

- Analysis of the meaning of selected vocabulary words with "structured language" in the target language and reinforcement of knowledge in the native language
- Visualization of the theme, including viewing and drawing illustrations of the story of Moses or examples from students' personal experiences
- Identification of virtues exhibited by characters in the story
- Discussion of the importance of religious stories to history

Teaching the Unit

Review the story of Moses' early life in Egypt, and discuss the relationship of the Egyptians and Israelites in the historical period. Pose the question, "What did Moses do to inspire others?" When reading and discussing the story, check for comprehension of unfamiliar words and concepts. Ask students to look up new words, write them down, along with their definitions, and use them in original sentences. Depending upon the complexity of the task, and individual abilities, the unit may be conducted in English or in the students' native languages.

What are the qualities of a leader that inspire others?

Grade Level: Grade 4, with adaptations for English language learners

Content Areas: English Language Arts, Foreign Languages, History and Social Science, and Arts

Provide time for drawing or painting as a response to the story, and for discussions of the drawings, using the new vocabulary.

Pose the question, *What are the qualities of a leader that inspire others?* Make sure students understand the question, and make a list as a class of leadership qualities shown in the story. Ask students to write a short essay on what it means to be a leader.

Assessment

Students could be assessed on their ability to:

- learn vocabulary and use new words in original sentences;
- follow rules of spelling, grammar, and writing conventions in the native and second languages;
- contribute to group discussion;
- convey abstractions such as love, respect, kindness, and courage in drawing or painting; and
- give oral presentations and write brief essays that show understanding of the historical narrative and leadership qualities.

Resources

Provide versions of the story told at varying levels of language difficulty, such as:

Georgie Adams, *The Bible Storybook*
Alice Bach and J. Cheryl Exam, *Moses' Ark: Stories from the Bible*
Leonard Everett Fisher, *Moses*
Warwick Hutton, *Moses in the Bulrushes*
"The Story of Moses," in *The Children's Bible* (Golden Press) or
The Prince of Egypt (animated film, Disney, 1998)

The Golden Rule and Codes of Conduct

Summary

With the help of their families and teachers, young people continually define and redefine how their personal conduct affects others. One objective of this unit is to introduce fourth graders to the codes of conduct of ancient and classical civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, India, Israel, Greece, and Rome. The second is to help them relate this knowledge to the present to answer the question, *What is conduct and how can it lead to responsible and irresponsible uses of power?*

Core Knowledge, World history

Section 1 d. Human Beginnings and Early Civilizations (Prehistory to 1000 BC)
Early civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and India

Sections 2 a, c, e, f, g, h. Classical Civilizations of the Ancient World (1000 BC to 500 AD)
Ancient Israelites: central teachings and legacies of Judaism
Athenian democracy: principles, practices, and legacy
Institutions, culture, and legacies of the Roman Republic and Empire
The classical civilization of India: Hinduism, Buddhism
The classical civilization of China: Confucianism, Taoism
Origins, central teachings, and the spread of Christianity

Standards

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, STANDARDS 5, 16

Teaching the Unit

To teach the unit, the teacher might integrate a direct mode of instruction with questions that can be answered by student research or from personal experience, such as

- What is conduct?

  How do friends treat one another? How do people treat one another in a big group like a classroom or school? What does "fairness" mean?

- What rules do we obey at home and school?
  Are rules always fair and right? Do they sometimes lead to irresponsible uses of power?

- What is responsibility? Power? Authority? Why does a society have laws?

What is conduct? How can it lead to responsible and irresponsible uses of power?

Grade Levels: Grade 4, but could also be adapted for use in grades 5–8.

Content Area: History and Social Science

- What codes of conduct existed in the past? How do they compare to laws today?

  How did people of ancient and classical civilizations think about conduct? What system of rules or laws did they have? How did they decide what these laws would be? How did their system of government function?

- What is the Golden Rule? Consider these versions from different religious traditions:

  Confucianism: Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.

  Zoroastrianism: That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself.

  Taoism: Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.

  Hinduism: This is the sum of duty: Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you.

  Buddhism: Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.

  Judaism: What is hateful to thyself, do not do to another.

  Christianity: All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

  Islam: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.[1]

  What do these statements have in common? If everyone were to apply the Golden Rule, what would our community look like? Would one person be strong or would many?

Assessment

A written quiz of key terms, such as authority, power, laws, rules, religion, morals, ethics, justice, respect, human rights. Open-ended questions about historical content that ask students to describe the contributions of important figures, such as Hammurabi, Moses, Jesus, Alexander the Great, Confucius, Buddha, or tenets of religions that began in classical civilizations.
A culminating exhibition of student learning in one of several formats—drawings, speeches, demonstrations, or performances—in which students demonstrate their understanding of the question, *What is conduct and how can it lead to responsible and irresponsible uses of power and authority?*

Resources

Seasons of Splendour: Tales, Myths, and Legends from India, by Madhur Jaffrey
Calliope Magazine, "Hinduism," (March/April 1993), "Buddhism," (March/April 1995)
Folktales and Fables of the Middle East and Africa, by Robert Ingpen and Barbara Hayes
Confucius and Ancient China by Theodore Rowland-Entwistle
The Magic Boat and other Chinese Folk Stories, by M. Jagendorf and Virginia Weng
Great Leaders of Ancient Greece and Rome, by Leonard Cotrell
The Aeneid for Boys and Girls by Alfred Church
First Book of Bible Lands, by Charles A. Robinson
Stories of the Jewish People, by Jose Patterson
Jerusalem, Shining Still, by Karla Kuskin
The Story of Religion, by Betsy and Giulio Maestro
Selected stories from different religions as told by invited speakers

[1] Betsy and Guilio Maestro, *The Story of Religions* (New York: Mulberry, 1996) 47.

Purposes and Meanings in the Arts: Images of Sharing, Cooperation, Community, and Harmony

Summary

The arts offer the teacher a rich reservoir of evocative material through which to examine character traits in the context of cultures past and present. Paintings that depict themes of sharing, cooperation, community, and harmony provide a springboard for the discussion of these qualities in children's lives. At the same time, teachers can use these images to cultivate skills in critical response. It is through careful, considered analyses of these works that students can move to interpretation of the content and the artist's intent.

Standards

ARTS, STANDARDS 6, 10.

Teaching the Unit: "What was the artist saying?"

Using inventory devices such as memory games or detective searches, students view a print and collectively identify various items and elements in the composition. They discuss the "center of interest" and related narrative and compositional devices employed by the artist. After students have described what they have seen, they speculate about the theme of the work and the artist's intentions. This discussion may be followed by an examination of other artwork by artists who also explored and expressed social issues.

After examining the print, students talk or write about times in their own lives when they shared something, cooperated, felt they were part of a community, or experienced a sense of harmony. How would they depict these images from their experience? What would be included? How would they create a center of interest? After brainstorming about how they would represent the theme visually in an incident from their own lives, students work individually or in groups to create their own images of sharing, cooperation, community, or harmony.

Because this unit involves discussion, vocabulary development, writing, and the concept of theme, it links to the English language arts curriculum. Its themes of positive human interactions and relationships, are also significant components of the Comprehensive Health and History and Social Science curricula.

How do artists shape our understanding of humanity?

Grade Levels:
Grades PreK–5

Content Area:
Visual Arts

Assessment

Students could be assessed on their ability to:

- participate in making a complete inventory of the image;
- incorporate their perceptions in an analysis of the composition;
- connect analysis to interpretation; and
- use interpretations to speculate on wider social meanings and purposes.

Resources

The following images are examples of works that might be used in discussions of how artists portray themes of sharing, cooperation, and creating community. They are all available in print form from Shorewood Fine Art Reproductions or Art Image Publications.

Grade 1: Sharing
Still Life with Three Puppies, by Paul Gauguin

Grade 2: Sharing
The Picture Book, by William Brymner

Grade 3: Cooperation
Inside the Sugar Shack, by Miyuki Tanobe

Grade 4: Creating Community
Green Corn Ceremony, by Awa Tsireh

Grade 5: Cooperation
Handball, by Ben Shahn

Harmony
The Peaceable Kingdom, by Edward Hicks (An original of this painting is in the Worcester Art Museum collection.)

Harmony, Cooperation, Community
One Hundred Children at Play, by a painter from the Southern Sung Dynasty, China

Sample Units for the Middle School Level

English Language Arts

Kindness and Happiness: *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* page 18

What does happiness mean? Must human beings be kind to achieve happiness? Using an African folktale that is similar to the European tale, *Cinderella,* this unit asks students to discuss the behavior of characters as they analyze the story.

Foreign Languages

Character Education and Grimms' *Fairy Tales* page 22

In the traditional tales collected by the Grimm brothers in the 19th century, good is rewarded and evil punished. This unit is designed for students studying a foreign language, and includes reading the stories, or excerpts of them, in German, and studying their cultural context.

History and Social Science

Freedom, Equality, Authority, and the Founding Documents page 24

What is freedom? Equality? Authority? Focusing on questions about the philosophy underlying American government, this unit examines the history of the gradual extension of civil rights to all American citizens.

Visual Arts

Purposes and Meanings in the Arts: Images of American Communities page 27

This unit builds on the skills of analyzing and interpreting artworks learned in elementary school. Paintings and prints selected for middle school students portray images of community.

Kindness and Happiness: *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*

Summary

Well-chosen picture storybooks give readers of any age the opportunity to experience fine literature in a short period of time. Written using a variety of literary techniques such as imagery, foreshadowing, clear characterization, and theme, picture storybooks come packed with what makes characters human: choices are made, consequences are experienced, lessons are learned, values are, or are not, understood. Sharing choice picture storybooks, then, offers students and teachers a stellar opportunity to consider the human condition.

In this unit, students read and analyze John Steptoe's *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: an African Tale* and consider the question, *To what extent does the author demonstrate that kindness is essential to becoming happy?* To answer the question, they must provide evidence from the text to demonstrate their understanding.

What is happiness? Must one be kind in order to be happy?

Grade Levels: Grades 5–8, but could also be adapted for use in grades 3–4 or 9–12

Content Areas: English Language Arts, History and Social Science

Standards:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, STANDARD 2, 11, 19
HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, STANDARD 5

Teaching the Unit

- Access students' prior knowledge of the concept of kindness in two ways. First, direct students in brainstorming ideas related to kindness by using a graphic organizer, Second, in journals and/or discussion, ask students to consider the extent to which *being kind is essential to becoming a happy person.* Have them support their ideas with examples from their personal experiences.
- Read aloud *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: an African Tale* by John Steptoe. Read through the complete story, maintaining the flow of the literature.
- Before reading the story a second time, show students the graphic organizer on the following page and explain what information they will listen for in the second reading: what characters do or say, whether or not the actions/words are kind, and their consequences. Ask them to complete the chart by including the other characters.

Graphic Organizer for the Story

Character	Action /Words	Kind? (Why?)	Unkind? (Why?)	Consequences?
Example: Nyasha	Gave boy a yam	Yes—she could tell he was hungry/ gave him her lunch		Boy smiled/King remembered her kindness and rewarded her
Other characters:				
Does the author show that being kind is essential to becoming a happy person?				
Evidence For			**Evidence Against**	

- Read the book again. Stop at key points and use the graphic organizer to model an analysis of characters' actions in terms of being kind or unkind. Encourage students to identify key points in the plot and contribute to the chart.
- Direct students to use the evidence on the chart to draw a conclusion about the extent to which the author demonstrates the theme and hold a discussion, recording ideas on the chart.
- Keeping the rubric on the following page in mind, write a sample response, based upon the students' notes, which answers the question, *To what extent does the author demonstrate that kindness is essential to becoming happy?* Keep the sample as a model.
- Divide students into small groups. Depending on their age and skills, have students read either a second picture storybook they choose from the collection you provide or a short story or novel the class is reading (see Additional Resources).
- Instruct each group to read and analyze its book, using the same graphic organizer and again drawing a conclusion about the extent to which the author supports the theme. Have students present their group findings to the class.

Assessment

- Present the scoring rubric for the open-response question to the students and explain the performance expectations on the rubric. Discuss the sample response in relation to the rubric.
- Give students ample time to write an open response to demonstrate their understanding of the extent to which the theme is present in their book or short story.
- Distribute a scoring rubric developed with your students or similar to the one on the following page.

Scoring Rubric

Score	Description
4	Student describes clearly and with detail the extent to which the author shows or contradicts the concept that being kind is essential to becoming a happy person and cites specific evidence from the text in a well-developed response
3	Student describes in a general way how the author demonstrates or contradicts the theme, but lacks sufficient specific evidence from the text to support the assertions
2	Student cites evidence from the text but does not sufficiently relate the evidence to the theme OR Student discusses the theme in a general way but does not sufficiently link the discussion to the text
1	Student provides some information that shows little or no understanding of how the theme relates to the literature
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant
blank	No response

- Introduce the assessment question:
  To what extent does the author show that being kind is essential to becoming a happy person? Use specific examples from the story to support your ideas.
- Keep student graphic organizers visible while students are writing.
- Have students score each other's writing and/or collect and score student writing.

Additional Resources

Picture storybooks based in part on the theme of kindness

The Patchwork Quilt, by Valerie Flournoy
The Great Kapok Tree, by Lynne Cherry
Apt. 3, by Ezra Jack Keats
Always Room for One More, by Sorche Nic Leodhas
Jim and the Beanstalk, by Raymond Briggs
That Mean Man, by Leisel Moak Skorpen
Mrs. Katz and Tush, by Patricia Polacco
Spinky Sulks, by William Steig
The Wind Thief, by Judi Barrett
Celia and the Sweet, Sweet Water, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
Horton Hears a Who, by Dr. Seuss

Short stories based in part on a theme of kindness for grades 7 and up

In *8 Plus 1,* by Robert Cormier,
"The Moustache" and
"President Cleveland, Where Are You?"
New Testament: "The Good Samaritan"
Selected folk and fairytales
"The Bishop's Silver," by Victor Hugo
(from *Les Miserables*)

Brief list of novels that relate to kindness (as well as other themes).

Grades 3-8

Twenty and Ten, by Claire Bishop
Charlotte's Web, by E. B. White
Shiloh Season, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
The Witch of Blackbird Pond, by Elizabeth Speare
The Boggart, by Susan Cooper
No Promises in the Wind, by Irene Hunt
Pigman, by Paul Zindel
The Goats, by Brock Cole
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, by Mildred Taylor
Holes, by Louis Sachar

Grades 9-12

Lord of the Flies, by William Golding
To Kill a Mockingbird, by Harper Lee
Les Miserables (the Bishop's Silver), by Victor Hugo
Crime and Punishment, by Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Grimms' *Fairy Tales* and Character Education

Summary

Fairy tales are a form of traditional oral literature that includes fanciful short stories with human and animal characters in which good is rewarded and evil punished. They often contain elements of magic, including supernatural characters such as witches, elves, and dragons. Most fairy tales derive from the tradition of oral storytelling. Because fairy tales exist in all cultures and are held to represent universal truths and values, they lend themselves to use in K–12 foreign language classrooms.

In this unit, students listen to and read fairy tales in the target language and identify and define the human commonalties represented by the characters in the fairy tales. Through classroom discussion and related activities, students explore the actions of the characters, the consequences of those actions, and the effect they have on relationships with others. By comparing versions of fairy tales written in the target language with familiar versions in English, students will gain insight into the target culture.

Standards

FOREIGN LANGUAGES, STANDARDS 2, 4
COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH, STANDARD 5
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, STANDARD 16

Teaching the Unit

Stage I of Language Proficiency, elementary or middle school levels

The K–8 grade span is a natural time to introduce traditional literature in the context of learning about literary genres, elements of plot, character, and setting. In grades K–4, some children are already familiar with the tales. Once they learn key vocabulary words in the target language, they are able to understand a fairy tale that is read aloud by the teacher. Most fairy tale books contain many illustrations that also help students to understand unfamiliar material. Classroom discussion should center on character traits and human commonalties as they are defined by the characters in the story; how these traits contribute to the identities of the characters; and how the traits influence the outcome of the fairy tale. Students could also be asked to draw parallels to situations in their own lives, or to illustrate the stories. The fairy tales could be dramatized, with students learning the lines of specific characters and the teacher reading the narrative. The teacher could

What universal truths about human nature are conveyed in fairy tales?

Grade Levels:
Grades K–12

Content Areas: Foreign Languages (German, but can be adapted to any foreign language by using fairy tales representative of that culture), with connections to Comprehensive Health and English Language Arts

also read or show videos of similar fairy tales from different cultures and help students to compare and contrast versions, especially as they relate to the ways in which character traits are represented by the characters.

The same techniques could be used for **Stage I** learners in **grades 5–8.** These students could also be asked to read other versions of the fairy tale in English (either traditional or "updated") before listening to or viewing the corresponding tale in the target language. Comparisons emphasizing the differences in character traits and the outcome of the fairy tales could then be made. In addition to dramatizing the target language version of the fairy tale, students could create a storyboard or write a comic strip to illustrate how the actions of the characters demonstrate their positive and negative character traits.

Stages II and III of Language Proficiency, middle and high school levels

Stage II/III learners in grades 5–12 should be able to read simplified versions (both original and contemporary) of the fairy tales in the target language. Classroom discussion will center on the same topics outlined above, but can occur in the target language. At this level, students should also be able to contribute experiences from their own lives as well as make connections to examples from history and literature. Using library collections or the Internet, they could also research fairy tales from other cultures and compare different versions of tales. After a discussion of the typical elements of fairy tales and how the characters exemplify human commonalties, students could be asked to write, dramatize, and videotape fairy tales of their own creation that incorporate these elements. Alternatively, they could "update" a traditional fairy tale and/or write a different ending to it.

Fairy tales and character traits:

Little Red Riding Hood (Rotkaeppchen): trustworthiness, honesty, kindness
Rapunzel: love, honesty, loyalty
The Seven Ravens (Die Sieben Raben): trust, loyalty
The Bremen Town Musicians (Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten): cooperation
Snow White (Schneewittchen): jealousy, envy
Cinderella (Aschenputtel): malice, spite, wickedness
The Frog King (Der Froschkoenig): honesty
Hansel and Gretl: deceit
The Golden Goose (Die Goldene Gans): generosity, sharing, compassion

Freedom, Equality, Authority, and the Founding Documents

Summary

The unit focuses upon the founding documents of the United States, the 18th century events, philosophies, and economic conditions that inspired them, and the efforts of individuals in the 19th and 20th centuries to extend freedom, equality, and justice to all Americans. Students read the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, selected Federalist papers, and Anti-Federalist writings. They research the biographies of selected authors of the documents, and discuss their beliefs about freedom, equality, and authority.
Why was the Constitution controversial when it was written?
Building on this background, students study the campaigns for the abolition of slavery, rights for African Americans, native Americans, immigrants, and women in the 19th century.
How effective a foundation did the founding documents provide for those seeking to extend civil and human rights?
The exploration of these questions allows students to consider how the concepts of freedom, equality, and authority affect their own lives.

How effective have the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and later Amendments been in securing freedom and equality for all American citizens?

Grade Level:
Grade 8

Content Area:
History and Social Science

Standards

History and Social Science, Standards 2, 4, 13, 17, 18
Core Knowledge, United States history

Sections 3e and f. The American Revolution: Creating a New Nation (1750–1815)

Leading founders, founding documents, and debates: Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison; state constitutions, Articles of Confederation, Northwest Ordinance, Constitution, Federalists, Anti-Federalists, the Bill of Rights

The Constitution; the federal system at its origins; union; separation of powers; the three-fifths compromise

Sections 4e, g, and h. Expansion, Reform, and Economic Growth (1800–1861)

Jacksonian Democracy and pre-Civil War reformers: popular politics, abolitionism, women's rights, and schooling

New immigrants, migration patterns; nativist hostility

Westward migration; Indian removals; war against Mexico

Sections 6a and e. The Advent of Modern America (1865–1920)

Changes and constraints for African Americans; *Plessy v. Ferguson*

New immigration and internal demographic shifts: African-American migration to the North and West; life in growing American cities

Teaching the Unit

To teach the unit, the teacher might integrate lectures, readings of primary sources, and research with questions, answers, and discussion of the personal experiences of students. The key questions are:

- What do the terms, *freedom, equality,* and *authority,* mean?
- How effective have the Bill of Rights and other founding documents been in securing freedom and equality for all United States citizens?

  Which experiences prompted leaders of the new Republic to write the Constitution and the Bill of Rights? What does the Bill of Rights say literally and figuratively about equality?

  Who had the right to vote under the Constitution when it was first ratified? Why was property ownership an issue in the debates about voting rights?

  How does the structure of the American government—the system of checks and balances and the three branches of government—provide for equality and the opportunity to express it?
- How do race, class, gender, and age affect a person's freedom, equality, and authority?

  What is the evidence for how Americans in the past thought about freedom, equality, and authority? Conduct research on people such as Thomas Jefferson, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Dubois, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, members of the Cherokee or Sioux Nations, and immigrant groups. Do you believe that all citizens of United States are free and equal today? Support your answer with specific examples.

Assessment

A culminating exhibition (a visual, oral, or written presentation) in which students demonstrate their understanding of

- the content of the founding documents;
- the historical context in which they were written; and
- an appraisal of the effectiveness of the founding documents in securing equality and freedom for American citizens in the past and present.

Resources

Founding documents and those related to them, such as the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Bill of Rights, Constitution, writings about the League of Iroquois, Massachusetts State Constitution of 1780, Federalist Papers, Anti-Federalist Papers

American history textbook or other general reference

Selections from:

Up From Slavery, by Booker T. Washington

The Souls of Black Folk, by W. E. B. Dubois

"The Seneca Falls Convention" and "United States v. Susan B. Anthony" in *The History of Women's Suffrage,* edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage

"Massacre at Wounded Knee," by Black Elk in *Black Elk Speaks,* by John G. Neihardt

"Custer is Killed at Little Bighorn," by Chief White Bull in *I Have Spoken,* edited by Virginia I. Armstrong

The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson, by Thomas Jefferson, edited by Adrienne Koch and William Penden

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson, by Joseph J. Ellis

Purposes and Meanings in the Arts: Images of American Communities

Summary

This unit continues the themes explored in a similar unit in the elementary grades. (See page 15.) At the middle school level, the emphasis is on the concept of community in America. Students are asked to interpret the meanings of artistic works by explaining how the subject matter and/or form reflect the events, ideas, religions, and customs of people living at a particular time in history.

What makes a community? How have 20th century artists depicted American communities?

Standards

ARTS, STANDARDS 6, 10.

What makes a community?

Students analyze compositions by American artists Grandma Moses and Faith Ringgold, and consider the images as artistic responses to personal memories, social events, family heritage, and a sense of community that goes beyond the individual family.

Assessment

Students could be assessed on their ability to:

- complete a description or inventory of the image;
- incorporate their perceptions in an analysis of the composition;
- connect analysis to interpretation; and
- use interpretations to speculate on wider social meanings and purposes of the works.

Grade Levels:
Grades 6–8

Content Area:
Visual Arts

Resources

The Quilting Bee, by Grandma Moses: community/connection
Church Picnic, by Faith Ringgold: community/connection

These works are available in print form from Shorewood Fine Art Reproductions and Art Image Publications.

Sample Units for the High School Level

Visual Arts, History and Social Science

Purposes and Meanings in the Arts: Images of Conflict and Compassion page 29

Paintings and prints selected for high school deal with conflict and compassion, shown in images of war by Francisco Goya, Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, and James Rosenquist. This unit complements the grade 10 world history curriculum.

Business Education (English Language Arts)

Business Ethics in Accounting page 31

High standards for professional ethics and personal integrity are important in the workplace. Students read and discuss case studies about decision making in business, considering the moral ramifications of alternative courses of action.

Foreign Languages

Cien Refranes, Cien Verdades **(One Hundred Proverbs, One Hundred Truths)** page 35

Proverbs are part of the oral tradition of any language. Because they are very short phrases with very deep meaning they are useful in teaching language and culture, and also serve as a good vehicle for character education. This unit is designed for the beginning or intermediate Spanish language class, and could also be used in a bilingual class.

Foreign Languages

Human Rights in Literature page 38

Advanced students of German read and analyze a novel written in German that presents the themes of prejudice and tolerance in cross-cultural interactions.

History and Social Science, English Language Arts

The Wonderful Land of Oz page 40

Students read an essay that interprets L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* as an allegory for the social, economic, and political changes of the 19th century and discuss the virtues of honesty, trustworthiness, and courage in political life. This unit could be used in a grade 11 American history course or in adult basic education class.

Purposes and Meanings in the Arts: Images of Conflict and Compassion

Summary

This unit continues the themes explored in similar units in the elementary and middle grades. (See pages 15 and 27.)
At the high school level, the emphasis is on the concepts of conflict, compassion, and protest as shown in images of war by Francisco Goya, Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, and James Rosenquist. Students are asked to interpret the meanings of artworks based upon evidence from artists' biographies, autobiographies, or videotaped or written interviews. This unit complements the content of a world history curriculum for grade 10, and United States history for grade 11.

Standards

Arts Standards 6, 10
History and Social Science, Standards 1, 5
Core Knowledge, World history

Francisco Goya
Section 5 g. The Age of Revolutionary Change (1700 to 1914)
Democratic and social reform in Europe: evolution and revolutions

Marc Chagall and Pablo Picasso
Sections 6 g, h, j, k. The World in the Era of Great Wars (1900 to 1945)
International Fascism; Italy, Spain; Nazi totalitarianism in Germany
Liberal democracies in danger: economic, social, and political crises
World War II: geography, leaders, military factors, and turning points
The human toll of the 20th century wars and genocides; the Holocaust

Core Knowledge, United States history

James Rosenquist
Section 8 e. The contemporary United States (1945 to present)
The 'sixties and 'seventies: assassinations, trauma; civil rights movement: advances and limits

Why do some works of art make us feel compassion for people we have never known, and situations we have never experienced? How have artists shaped our ideas about war in the modern world?

Grade Levels:
Grades 9–12

Content Area:
Visual Arts

Teaching the Unit

"What was the artist saying?"

In examining images of war and conflict by Goya, Picasso, Chagall, and Rosenquist, students will attend to the materials, imagery, compositional choices, and context in the creation of art which records or responds to war. The imagery of the artists will be connected to biographical material about them and commentaries from the historical period in which the images were created. Students will be asked to write a commentary on the imagery that addresses the relationship between the aesthetic elements in the work and the political or personal message(s) of the creators. Students may be asked to develop a visual response to a current conflict.

Assessment

Students could be assessed on their ability to:

- complete a systematic inventory of individual images;
- incorporate their perceptions in an analysis of the compositions;
- connect their analysis to interpretation of the artist's intent/expressive purposes;
- use interpretations to speculate about the wider social meanings/purposes and the cultural contexts upon which the paintings or prints were based;
- write a commentary on the imagery, comparing the styles of different artists; and
- create a persuasive image on a related theme.

Resources

Selections from the print series, *The Disasters of War,* by Francisco Goya
The War, by Marc Chagall
Guernica, by Pablo Picasso
F-111, by James Rosenquist
Prints are available from Shorewood Fine Art Reproductions and Art Image Publications.

For background reading and viewing:

Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment, by Alfredo E. Pérez Sanchez and Eleanor Sayre
Chagall, by Werner Hoffmann or *Marc Chagall,* by Jacob Baal-Teshura
Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective, Museum of Modern Art, New York
Picasso's Guernica, by Rudolf Arnheim
American Visions: the Epic History of American Art, by Robert Hughes

Additional Resources

Liberty Leading the People to the Barricades, by Eugène Delacroix

Various prints by Kathe Kollowitz

The Vietnam Memorial, by Maya Lin

American Marines Raising the American Flag on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima,
news photograph by Joe Rosenthal

Integrating Ethics into the Business Education Curriculum

Summary

Because workers are held personally and legally responsible for the choices they make, corporations view training in ethics as an important investment. The objective of this unit is to assist students in making wise decisions and communicating them clearly orally and in writing. First, students discuss a case study about a personal ethical dilemma related to work. They then research a business situation that involves company policies, and analyze the situation as a case study in corporate ethical decision making. This unit is aligned to Standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and to the SCANS (Secretary's Commission for Achieving Necessary Skills) standards.

Standards

English Language Arts, Standards 2, 9, 19, 26
Comprehensive Health, Standard 11
History and Social Science, Standard 5

SCANS Business Skills[2]

Allocates Time—Estimates the time required to complete a project by task.

Participates as a Member of a Team—Works cooperatively with others and contributes to group with ideas, suggestions, and effort.

Teaches Others—Helps others learn.

Exercises Leadership—Communicates thoughts, feelings, and ideas to justify a position; and encourages, persuades, convinces, or otherwise motivates an individual or group, including responsibly challenging existing procedures, policies, or authority.

Negotiates—Works toward an agreement that may involve exchanging specific resources or resolving divergent interests.

Nearly all business decisions have ethical ramifications. How can we broaden students' perspectives so they will consider the consequences of decisions before they are made?

Grade Levels:
Grades 9–12

Content Areas:
English Language Arts, Comprehensive Health, and History and Social Science

[2] Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000.* Washington, DC: United States Department of Labor, 1991.

SCANS Business Skills (continued)

Works with Cultural Diversity—Works well with men and women and with a variety of ethical, social, or educational backgrounds.

Improves and Designs Systems—Makes suggestions to modify existing systems to improve products or services, and develops new or alternative systems.

Selects Technology—Judges which set of procedures, tools, or machines, including computers and their programs, will produce the desired results.

Teaching the Unit: Using the Case Study Approach

The primary purposes of using ethics cases in business classes are:

- to make students aware that business decisions have ethical ramifications;
- to help students consider the consequences of a business decision before it is made; and
- to help students acquire an understanding of the views of others.

Cases should be adapted to fit the age, experience, knowledge, and interests of the students. Based upon situations from the world of work, cases may be drawn from actual incidents reported in business journals or newspapers, or from fiction or drama. Before discussing the case, an ethical decision model for students should be developed. Questions and solutions for ethics cases can be structured to fit the model.

Ethical Decision Model

Identify the ethical dilemma.
Identify alternative actions.
Identify the affected parties.
Identify the effects of the alternatives on the parties.
Select the best alternative.

Part I: A Demonstration Case Study in Personal Ethics

Bud will graduate from high school in June and has accepted a job in the accounting department for a local company called Honor One. In late spring Bud receives a call from a second company offering a job that pays more money and that is located in a nearby city. Bud would like to move to the new city and prefers the second company because it is larger and would offer a greater variety of assignments.

Questions

1. What are the ethical issues?
2. What are Bud's alternatives?
3. Who are the affected parties?
4. How do the alternatives affect the parties?
5. What is your decision?

Teaching Strategies

Separate the whiteboard/chalkboard or an overhead transparency into four sections, one for each of the first four questions in the ethics decision model. Write students' responses on the board or a transparency to keep the discussion flowing.

After giving students the case, ask them to identify the ethical issues(s). List each issue as a student mentions it. Ask for alternative actions that Bud may take, and list them. It is often the best strategy to list all alternatives given by students. If some are trivial or off the mark the instructor can simply eliminate them from later discussion.

Ask students to identify the affected parties and the effects of the alternatives on them. The instructor should decide whether to discuss the alternatives and their effects immediately or after all alternatives have been listed. The latter method often creates a livelier discussion and prevents students from becoming too committed to a solution before all the possibilities are known. Guiding the discussion is a very important aspect of the instructor's role because he or she can manage the time as well as the direction the discussion takes.

To help improve participation and discussion, the instructor plays a vital role in helping students understand that nothing they say in the discussion is "wrong." Students should understand that the classroom is a relatively "risk free" environment in which to discuss ethical decisions.

Assessment

Students could be assessed on their ability to:

- identify the ethical issues, the alternatives, and how people involved that will be affected;
- pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in the group discussion; and
- work toward an agreement that involves resolving divergent interests (SCANS Skill—negotiaton).

Part II: Researching a Case Study on Ethical Company Practices

Another way to help students become more aware of ethical considerations is to have them find examples of actual business practices from a magazine, newspaper, or the Internet and analyze the situation as a case study. They identify business behavior that is ethical, questionable, or unethical and analyze the impact of these different kinds of behavior on the company, owners, employees, customers, and the public. Students should keep the five steps of the ethical decision model in mind as they analyze the business situation and write their report.

Assignment

Find an article describing a situation which involved ethical practices. Write a short report that describes the business decision and analyzes its consequences. The outline on the following page is a guide for the content of the report.

A. Write a brief description of the situation, the decision to be made, and the actions taken by the people involved in the decision.

B. Identify the ethical issue or issues.

C. Identify the people involved.

D. Describe the company's or individual's actions.

E. Describe the impact of the actions on the business, its owners, its employers, its customers, or the general public.

F. Explain whether the actions taken were ethical, questionable, or unethical.

G. If you believe that a better decision could have been made, explain an alternative action you would have taken, and why you believe this would be a wiser course of action.

Assessment

Students might write an essay about the case they have chosen, or present their conclusions as script for a television interview program, or for a documentary.
They could be assessed on their ability to:

- identify those character traits that are connected with peaceful living in society, such as respectfulness, tolerance, honesty, self-discipline, kindness, and empathy;
- obtain information by using a variety of media and evaluate the quality of the information obtained;
- identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed; and
- write compositions with a clear focus, logically related ideas to develop it, and adequate supporting detail.

Cien Refranes, Cien Verdades
One Hundred Proverbs, One Hundred Truths

Summary

Proverbs are part of the oral tradition of any language. Because they are very short phrases with very deep meaning, they are useful in teaching language and culture and also serve as a good vehicle for character education. The Spanish language is very rich in proverbs that are widely used in everyday speech by all kinds of people: shop-assistants or clerks, doctors or university professors, students or judges. Therefore, students should know and use proverbs if they want to be considered proficient in Spanish. By translating Spanish proverbs into English, learners can compare differences in the syntax, morphology, semantics, and even phonology in the two languages.

Through reading and discussion students will be engaged in **Communication** about values that are universal, common to all **Cultures,** no matter the language that is spoken. Slight cultural differences can be appreciated, not only in the meaning, but also in the way those values are expressed (hence the **Connection** of this unit with other subjects, such as English Language Arts). **Comparison** between cultures will be twofold: structural and semantic. Finally students will improve their research ability by getting information about proverbs from the **Community** around them.

How do proverbs in Spanish express truths about friendship, self-discipline, prudence, courtesy, and honesty?

Standards

FOREIGN LANGUAGES, STANDARDS 2, 3, 5
COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH, STANDARD 7

Grade Level: Stage 1 or 2 Spanish as a foreign language (middle or high school), or bilingual Spanish/English class

Content Area: Foreign Languages, English Language Arts, and Comprehensive Health

Teaching the Unit

Ask students to define what a proverb is, and consider who uses proverbs, why they are used, and under what circumstances. Students make a list of proverbs they know in English and translate them literally into Spanish.

Students are given a list of proverbs in Spanish, and a list of headings that can be considered character traits. Working in pairs, they study the meaning of the proverbs and group them under each heading. They translate the Spanish proverbs literally into English and provide the equivalent proverb in English if it exists.

Headings: *Amistad* (friendship); *Constancia y trabajo* (self-discipline); *Prudencia* (prudence); *Cortesía* (courtesy); *Honradez* (honesty).

Examples of Whole Proverbs

De sabios es hablar poco y bien. (It is wise to speak little and well.)

Quien a su prójimo engaña, a sí mismo engaña. (Those who deceive others deceive themselves.)

En la necesidad se conoce la amistad.

No se ganó Zamora en una hora.

Amigo en la adversidad es amigo de verdad.

Lo cortés no quita la valiente.

El que algo quiere algo le cuesta.

Más vale callar que mal hablar.

Quien a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra le cobija.

Para aprender es menester padecer.

Una mala lengua destruye a un pueblo.

Then each group gets a list of proverbs split into two parts. All the pairs are mixed up.

Examples of Proverbs Split into Two Parts

Pereza ... no alza cabeza. (Laziness ... does not raise your head.)

La ropa sucia ... se debe lavar en casa. (Dirty clothes ... should be washed at home.)

Haz bien ... y no mires a quien.

Limpieza y sanidad ... son amigos de verdad.

El reir del llorar ... poco suelen distar.

Más fácil es al burro preguntar, ... que al sabio contestar.

Cuando el río suena, ... agua lleva.

El saber ... no ocupa lugar.

Más vale solo ... que mal acompañado.

Al toro hay que ... cogerlo por los cuernos.

Groups match the correct two parts of each proverb, write the meaning of the proverb in Spanish, and describe a situation in which it might be used. Each group presents an explanation of the proverb and its use to classmates, who agree or disagree with the response.

Homework

1. Each student illustrates one of the proverbs, using no words. The following day students match the illustrations with the proverbs.
2. Students find at least ten proverbs in English that their friends and family use. They write them down, with their literal translations in Spanish, their meanings, and the equivalent proverbs in Spanish. In bilingual classes the same could be done, starting with Spanish proverbs and finding English equivalents.

Assessment

1. Students write five short dialogues in Spanish, each of which includes at least one proverb.
2. Students write an essay discussing whether traditional proverbs are still meaningful in our time, using specific examples to support their argument. Students could be assessed on their ability to:
    - use Spanish to present information and concepts;
    - understand proverbs written in Spanish;
    - demonstrate knowledge of the purpose of proverbs in a culture; and
    - compare, contrast, and exchange views on aspects of the target culture.

Additional Resources from Spanish Literature

The following list of books includes just a few examples of works of literature, both classical and contemporary, which can be used as a resource for character education.

Alonso, Fernando, *El árbol de los sueños*

Anónimo, *El lazarillo de Tormes*

Cervantes, Miguel de, *Novelas ejemplares*

Delibes, Miguel, *El camino*

Don Juan Manuel, *El Conde Lucanor*

Fuertes, Gloria, *Poesia*

Garcia, David, *Cuentos favoritos de Puerto Rico*

Garcia Lorca, Federico, *Llanto por la muerte de Ignacio Sánchez Mejias*

Garcia Márques, Gabriel, *Crónica de un muerte anunciada*

Jiménez, Juan Ramón, *Platero y yo*

Kurtz, Carmen, *Veva*

Martin, André and Ribera, Jaime, *No pidas sardinas fuera de temporada*

Quino, *Historias de Mafalda*

Human Rights in Literature

Summary

During this three-week unit students explore the themes of respect and tolerance of cultural differences through the reading of the short novel, *Yildiz heisst Stern,* by Isolde Heyne. In journals and classroom discussions students explore how prejudice based on ethnicity and cultural differences can lead to violations of basic human rights and violent conflict. They gain an understanding of Germany's perspective on its large immigrant population, and connect this knowledge to historical events and their own personal experiences. Students also examine the role of the family in this story.

Standards

FOREIGN LANGUAGES, STANDARDS 1, 2, 3
COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH, STANDARDS 6, 7, 10
HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, STANDARD 5
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, STANDARD 19

Summary of the story

Yildiz is a Turkish teenager living in a large German city. She has been raised and schooled in Germany, but her name, appearance, and cultural practices reveal her Turkish heritage. Her parents are traditional Muslims who own a greengrocer's shop. Yildiz has an older brother who also lives at home. As the story progresses she experiences examples of intolerance which start with whispered comments and flat tires on her bike and culminate in her abduction and violent treatment by a group of "skinheads." Her parents' shop is attacked and besmeared with the slogan "Auslaender 'raus" (Foreigners, be gone). In an effort to defend the honor of his sister and parents, Yildiz' brother becomes involved in a situation which eventually leads to the shooting of one of her tormentors. Her boyfriend, an ethnic German, is also harassed, but his character represents the voice of reason. Layered on top of these experiences is Yildiz' arranged engagement to a boy "back home." He wants a traditional Muslim marriage, which would stifle Yildiz' dreams of becoming a doctor. Thus, the cultural conflict occurs both externally and within her own family.

Is conflict inevitable when different cultures interact?

Grade Levels:
Grades 10–12 (Stages II or III of Language Proficiency)

Content Areas: Foreign Languages (German) with connections to Comprehensive Health, English Language Arts, and History and Social Science

Teaching the Unit

Through literature written in the target language, teachers can help students explore universal themes that examine the nature of human values such as respect for and tolerance of cultural, religious, and ethnic differences. The effect of religious or racial prejudice on individual relationships and society as a whole, and how prejudice can lead to violence should be an integral part of this exploration.

Prior to beginning the unit the teacher should ask students to recall historical instances in which a lack of respect for peoples' cultural, religious, and ethnic differences has led to conflict. Examples from current events and school experiences can also be included. These instances should be recorded on wall charts and expanded as the unit progresses.

Students will be required to keep a reading journal from Yildiz' point of view in which they record her reactions to and feelings about the instances of disrespect, intolerance, and violence that she encounters in the course of the story. They should also document how Yildiz' family's values, and relationships enter into the events of the story. The journal entries, which may also include personal observations and reflections, will provide the basis for classroom discussions about the significance of each section to the theme. Students will not only strengthen their reading skills, but also their ability to communicate ideas orally as they engage in classroom discussions.

Assessment

The assessment for this unit will require students to write a well-organized essay in which they express their opinion on the essential question while supporting it with evidence from the reading.

Performance assessment: Students could write and perform a short play about an instance of disrespect, intolerance, respect, or tolerance in their school or community.

Performance assessment: Students could write and perform a different ending to the story where the characters make choices that result in a different resolution.

Resource

Yildiz heisst Stern, by Isolde Heyne (Berlin, Germany and Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers). This novel is available only in German.

The Wonderful Land of Oz: A Mirror of American Values?

Summary

In the late 19th century, when the United States began to change radically from an agrarian to an industrial society, there was tremendous upheaval focused on issues such as whether there should be a gold- or silver-based monetary system; crises and losses of the American farmer; industrial expansion; and a myriad of social and cultural changes. In this unit, students read an excerpt from an essay that interprets L. Frank Baum's children's fantasy of 1900, *The Wizard of Oz*, as an allegory of American politics of the period. A close reading of the essay encourages discussion about the choices the characters in the *Wizard of Oz* make, how the author shows character traits; and the degree to which the story resembles a fairy tale, fable, or myth.

Standards

History and Social Science, Standards 1, 5
Core Knowledge, United States history

Section 6g. The Advent of Modern America (1865-1920)
Crises and losses on American farms; the populist movement

English Language Arts, Standards 16, 17

Teaching the Unit

Review the history of the gold and silver standard controversy, and the social conditions of the late 19th century. Read Baum's book, focusing on the characters, their choices, and the consequences of those choices. Then read the essay, and discuss the questions below.

Excerpt from the Essay

> A restless dreamer, Frank Baum tried his hand at several careers before he gained fame and fortune as a writer of children's literature. From 1888 to 1891, he ran a store and newspaper in South Dakota, where he experienced the desolation and grayness that accompanied agrarian discontent. An avid supporter of William Jennings Bryan in the "battle of the standards," Baum wrote an enduring allegory of the silver movement, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Published in April 1900, it was an immediate success. ...

***The Wizard of Oz* has become an American icon, told and retold in books, films, and theatre. What does its popularity tell us about American character?**

Grade Levels:
Grades 11–12 or
Adult Basic Education

Content Areas:
History and Social Science,
English Language Arts

> In [the book], Dorothy (every person) is carried by a cyclone (a victory of the silver forces at the poll) from drought-stricken Kansas to a marvelous land of riches and witches. ...On arrival, Dorothy disposes of one witch, the Wicked Witch of the East (the Eastern money power and those favoring gold) and frees the Munchkins (the common people) from servitude. To return to Kansas, she must first go to the Emerald City (the national capital, greenback-colored).
>
> ...Dorothy meets the Scarecrow (the farmer), who has been told he has no brain but actually possesses great common sense...the Tin Woodman (the industrial worker), who feels he has become heartless but discovers the spirit of love and cooperation; and the Cowardly Lion (reformers, particularly William Jennings Bryan), who turns out not to be very cowardly after all.
>
> ...Baum wanted to American fairy tales to "bear the stamp of our times..." The land of Oz reflected his belief in the American values of freedom and independence, love of family, self-reliance, individualism, and sympathy for the underdog. *Oz,* he said in the original introduction, aspires to being a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out.[3]

- In this interpretation of *The Wizard of Oz,* how do the characters represent the political and social viewpoints of the late 19th century?
- According to this essay, what sources did L. Frank Baum use to create metaphors and explore the social issues of the times?
- How does the interpretive essay explore individual choices, actions, and character? Which characters represent good citizenship?
- How accurate is this interpretation of the book, *The Wizard of Oz?*
- Could there be other explanations for the appeal of the story?

Consider myths, in which heroes undertake journeys, are aided by magical companions, and overcome great odds, or fables, such as those by Aesop. (See "Using Aesop's *Fables* to Explore Character Traits," page 9.) Does this story have a moral? If so, what is it?

The discussion of the essay could be followed by small group research/discussion on the issues raised in discussions or in the reading. Students could conduct oral history interviews to find out the major social and political concerns in their local communities at the turn of the millennium and compare these with the political and economic concerns of the late 19th century.

Assessment

Students could be assessed on their ability to:

- interpret the theme of the story and explain its literary and historical context;
- conduct research on issues in the past and present; and
- connect the theme of the story with current events.

[3] "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," in *America Past and Present, Volume 2, from 1865,* edited by Robert A. Divine and T. H. Breen (New York: HarperCollins, 1991) 608–609.

Character, Civility, and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:
A Collection of Sample Units

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